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Letter dated 15 December 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward a letter addressed to you, dated 13 December 2006, from Isaias Afwerki, President of the State of Eritrea, concerning the situation in Somalia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Araya **Desta**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 15 December 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I refer to your letter of 8 August, the original copy of which I received this week, regarding the events unfolding in Somalia.

As you are aware, Somalia has gone through calamitous state of civil strife and mayhem for the last 15 years. The spiral of internecine war that plagued the country had virtually immobilized the central State, weakened the fabric of the Somali nation and instilled despair and destitution in its people, who were exposed to various types of extortion by the warlords. In spite of its linguistic, cultural and religious homogeneity — something unique in Africa — Somalia was gradually drifting to the brink of fragmentation and Balkanization with the emergence of mini-entities such as Somali-land, Punt-land, Juba-land and Benadir-land. It must be pointed out that external negative intervention by some Powers that had historically sought to weaken and divide Somalia has aggravated this situation.

It was against this backdrop and the emergence of new, promising, realities on the ground aimed at the reconstitution of Somalia that the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) convened successive meetings at the Foreign Minister level in June and August this year. As you have rightly emphasized, the thrust of the decision of the IGAD Foreign Ministers meeting was to promote the advent of sustainable peace in Somalia by supporting the dialogue initiated in Khartoum under the auspices of the Government of the Sudan.

Of course, we cannot pretend that there was consensus among IGAD member States in regard to the political realities obtaining in Somalia. But it must be underlined that there was no tacit or explicit understanding to deploy a "peacekeeping force" in support of one faction or to request a partial lifting of the arms embargo. Several IGAD member States, including Eritrea, in fact insisted that any peacekeeping arrangement, if necessary, would be a sequel to, and contemplated after the achievement of, a viable framework for a political and peaceful solution. Practical arrangements for a peacekeeping force were considered merely on a contingency basis, and for eventual reactivation when and if this would be necessary under the conditions of a viable framework of peace agreed to by the Somali parties.

In view of these realities, it is clear that the substance of Security Council resolution 1725 (2006), adopted on 6 December 2006, does not reflect the unified position of IGAD. And in practice, it can only undermine all constructive efforts under way aimed at promoting peace and stability, which, as you stated, would have had beneficial implications not only for the long-suffering people of Somalia but also for the region as a whole.

In the event, I urge you to ensure that the United Nations does not become a party to a misguided approach that will sow further conflict and suffering in Somalia and the region as a whole to advance the interests of some parties, in contravention of the principles and ideals enunciated in the Charter of the United Nations.

(*Signed*) Isaias **Afwerki**